

Teacher Capacity & Student Learning

PERPICH ARTS INTEGRATION PROJECT

2013-2014 Summary Report

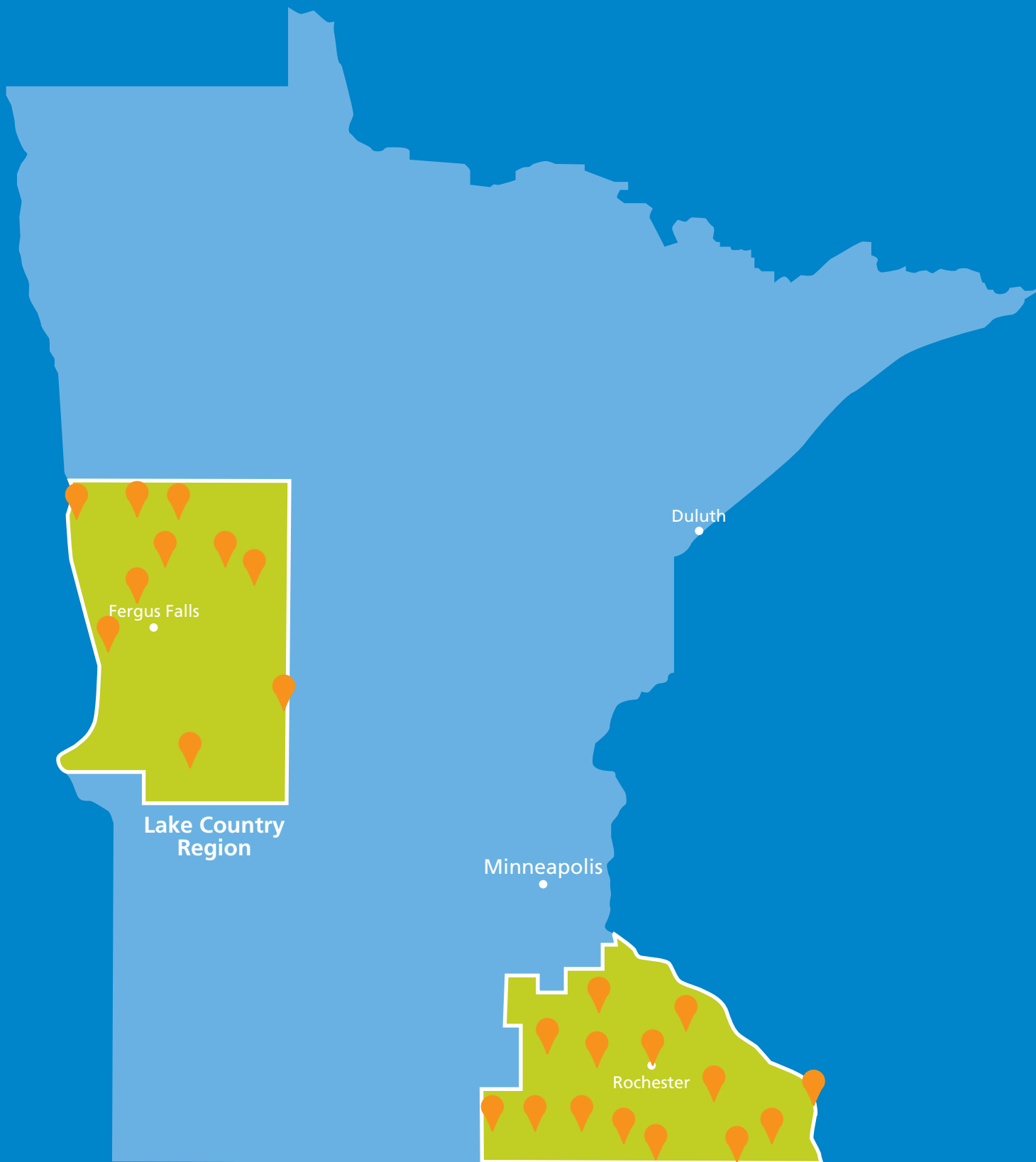


PERPICH

TEACHING IN AND
THROUGH THE ARTS



A student from John Adams Middle School in Rochester, Minnesota poses with a chalkboard as a result of work in an arts integrated unit combining visual art, technology and English language arts delivered by Elizabeth Christensen, Jodi Edmonson, Mike Hutchins with teaching artist, Wing Young Huie



Fergus Falls

Duluth

Minneapolis

Rochester

Lake Country
Region

Southeast Region

BACKGROUND

The Perpich Arts Integration Project began in 2010. Since then, 259 teachers have received sustained and intensive professional development to build their capacities for planning, delivering, and reflecting on arts integration. These teachers, in 48 schools, have developed arts-integrated units that 9,882 Minnesota students have directly experienced. With guidance from the Minnesota Legislature, the Perpich Arts Integration Project set two goals:

Goal 1: Improve standards-based student learning through collaborative arts integration, a strategy used by teachers and supported by administrators.

Goal 2: Increase the capacity of teachers to design, implement, and assess collaborative arts integration in Minnesota schools, and the capacity of administrators to support this instructional strategy.

This report summarizes the project, and highlights evaluation findings about student and teacher learning for schools in the Southeast and Lakes Country Regions during the 2013-2014 school year.

Teachers in nineteen schools from the Lakes Country and Southeast designed, taught and assessed 43 arts integrated units with the support of Perpich staff. These units were created to address a wide range of benchmarks of the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards and included learning in more than 10 different content areas.

During their final year in the project, Lakes Country schools transitioned from direct Perpich support through regular site visits, to an “on-call” consultation approach. This shift was to encourage teachers to rely on the expertise they had been developing through the project.

Schools in the Southeast Region were in their second year, meeting regularly with Perpich staff who assisted them with planning for arts integration. New teams in that region received more frequent visits.



IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING

Engagement and Thoughtfulness

Arts-integrated units ask students to learn multiple subjects together. Students bridge subject matter boundaries, using their learning to link content as they produce new, often innovative creations. This puts learning in motion.

Students interact with peers and teachers as they consider the content they are learning, make decisions about how to use it, and construct novel projects highlighting knowledge connections. Students are thinking, conferring, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, bridging, planning, creating, and producing.

The evaluation team observed arts integrated and regular classrooms to examine student learning and applied two measures: the level of student **engagement** and quality of their **thoughtfulness**.

67%

of students are highly engaged in arts integrated lessons

Students are
4.4

times more likely to be highly thoughtful and highly engaged

Engaged Students:

- attend to the task at hand
- confer and interact with peers
- transition smoothly from one part of the lesson to another
- ask questions
- seek help
- get loud (within parameters)

Thoughtful Students:

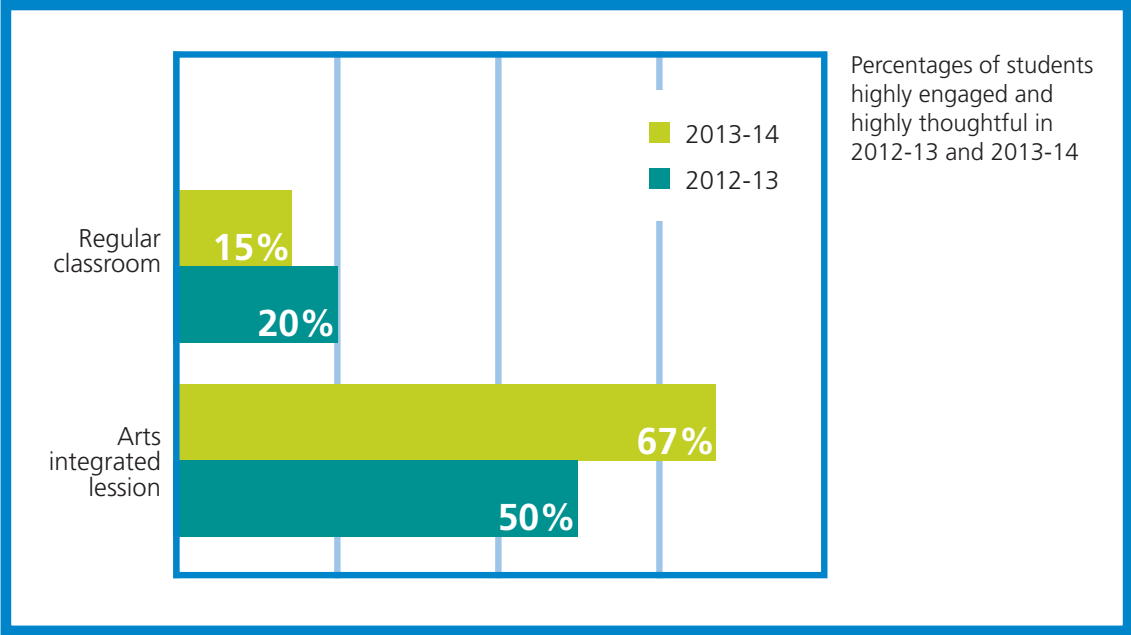
- make design choices
- have to respond to teacher questions randomly rather than being able to volunteer
- use content-relevant and accurate language
- create artists' statements and/or offer descriptions and interpretations of their artwork
- formulate opinions and defend them
- direct their conversations with groups and organize themselves for tasks
- conduct and discuss research with peers
- apply criteria/rules to judge the degree they had completed a task well (or not too well)



A trio of students from Plainview-Elgin-Millville High School discuss their plans for an arts-integrated project in Joe Cerar's social studies classroom.

Observation of arts integration in classrooms in 2012-13 showed 50% of the students highly engaged and using high thoughtfulness, compared with 20% of students observed in classes with regular instruction. In 2013-14, similar observation of arts integration showed 67% of the students were highly engaged and using high thoughtfulness, compared to 15% in classrooms with regular instruction. In the 2013-14 project year, **students were observed to be 4.4 times more likely to be highly thoughtful and highly engaged in arts integrated units.** Comparing observations for 2013 and 2014, the percentage of arts integrated lessons that provoke student thoughtfulness and engagement increased over the two-year period, suggesting that teachers are getting better at designing lessons that invite students to engage deeply and thoughtfully.

Engagement and Thoughtfulness - Table 1



TEACHERS REPORT STUDENT GROWTH

Teachers were surveyed about how frequently students engaged in nine powerful learning activities as they occurred in arts integrated and in regular instruction (See Table 2). Teachers were asked to report the frequency of these activities on a five-point scale (from 5 = always to 1 = never).

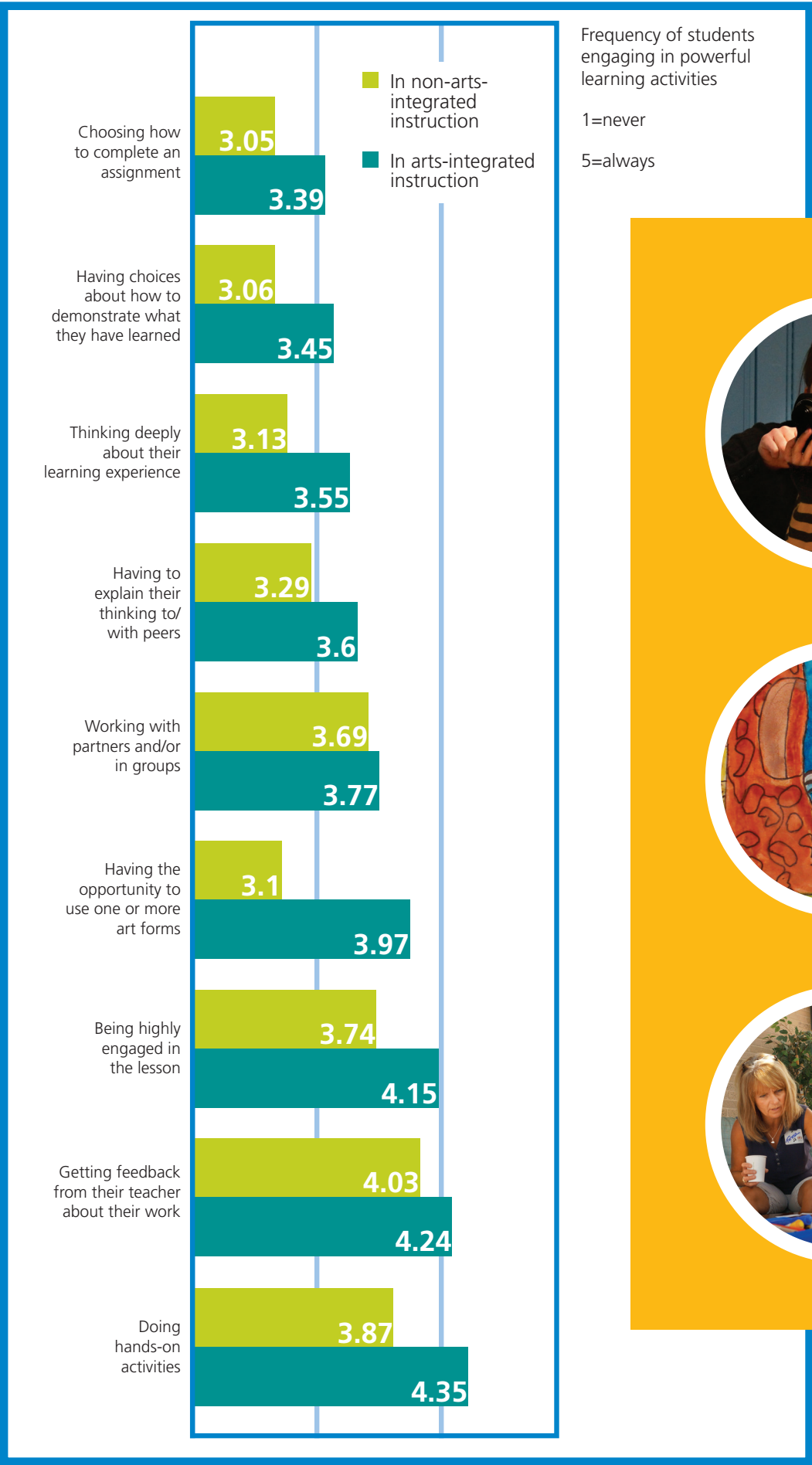
There were significant differences in the frequency of these activities between arts-related and non-arts-related lessons. **This is probably the most powerful finding from the teacher survey. Students are consistently getting more opportunities that promote learning through arts-integrated instruction.**

The Perpich Arts Integration Project increased teacher capacities leading to instruction that engendered high levels of student engagement and thoughtfulness, as well as relatively high performance overall. **Teachers believed they were able to reach beyond those students who normally did well in school to those who often perform at the margins.**

Students in Bernard Berry's band classroom at John Adams Middle School in Rochester, Minnesota welcomed science teacher Deb Las to help learn about the physics behind sound production.



Nine Powerful Learning Activities - Table 2



TEACHER CAPACITY

Results suggest that teacher capacity and student learning are connected in fundamental ways. For students to learn from arts integrated units, teachers must have the capacity to collaboratively design, implement, and assess them. The project builds teacher capacity in eight key skills for arts integration.

Teachers practice eight key skills to implement arts integration and improve student learning

- 1** Collaborating with colleagues for professional learning
- 2** Creating arts integrated units
- 3** Aligning learning goals with assessment activities and evaluative criteria
- 4** Reflecting on student work
- 5** Modifying instruction in response to student evidence of learning
- 6** Improving assessment design and application
- 7** Increasing knowledge of arts integration
- 8** Using technology and intensive project support

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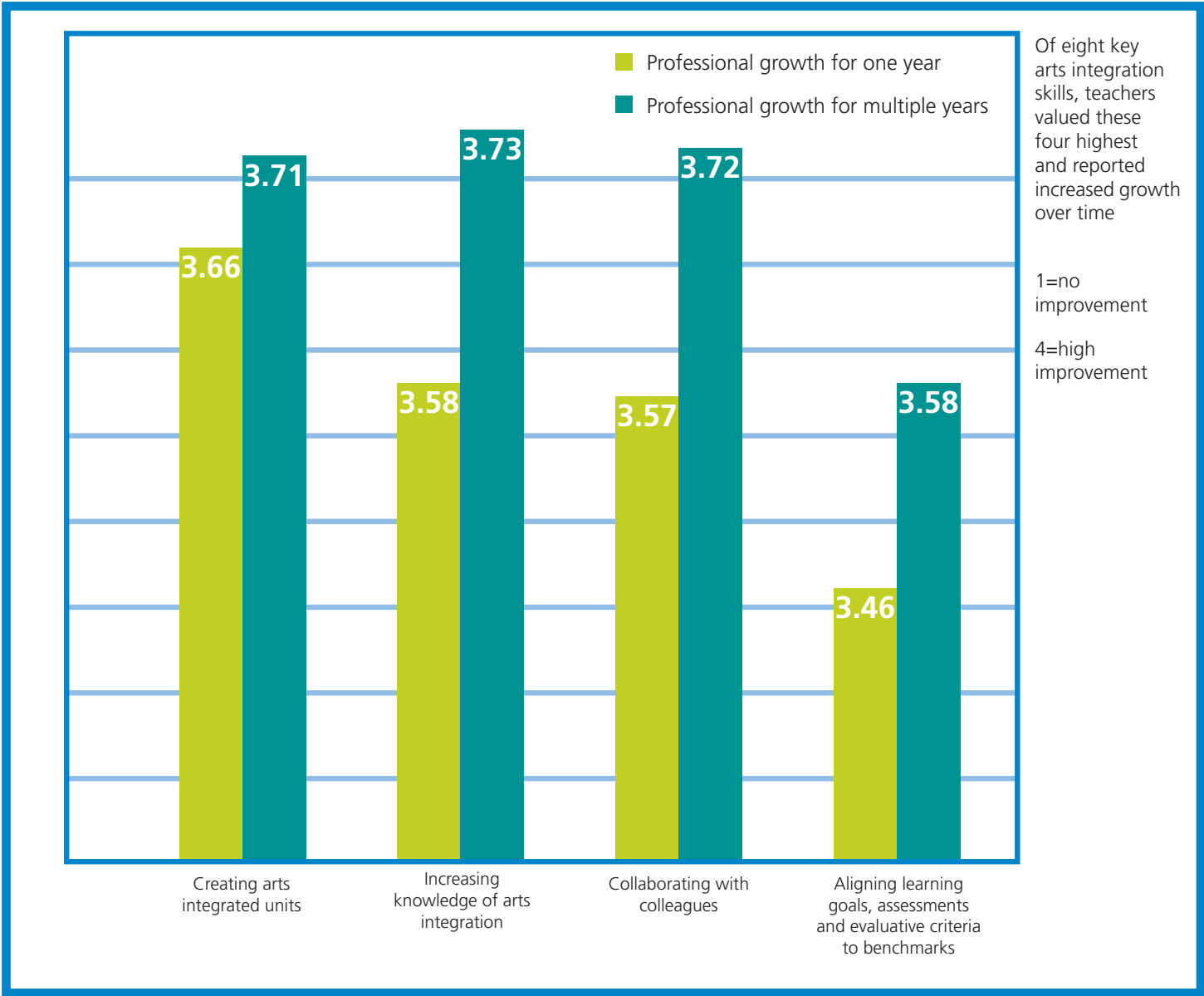
We are trying to do something different this year with Perpich. The kids are grasping the content far better than they did when we taught standards before working with the Perpich Center.

- Teacher Participant

Plainview-Elgin-Millville visual arts teacher Mary Chick displays a piece of student artwork created in an arts integrated unit that she, English language arts teacher Tracy Olson, and social studies teacher Joe Cerar created and taught.



Teacher capacity growth - Table 3



Teachers were asked about the growth of their newly acquired skills over time. **Teachers felt their capacities grew in 2013 and continued to improve in 2014.**

Teachers were also asked to assess the importance of each of these eight key skills and the likelihood that they would be sustained. Those areas that they judged most important for sustainability and most likely to be sustained were:

- collaborating with colleagues
- creating arts integrated units, and
- aligning learning goals, assessment, and evaluative criteria to benchmarks.

SUPPORTING TEACHER GROWTH

Teachers value collaboration with colleagues among their top three rated skills for sustaining arts integration. To try out collaboration they practice with Perpich staff who are invited into classrooms for reflection and coaching. Information from school visits and teacher surveys show teachers benefitted from and highly valued Perpich Center assistance. These sources underscore the ability of the arts integration staff to equip teachers to confidently plan and implement their arts integrated units.

La Crescent High School visual arts teacher, Nicole Greener, works with her team of teachers to define “arts integration” during a summer workshop in Winona, MN.



Building and Sustaining Capacity for Arts Integration

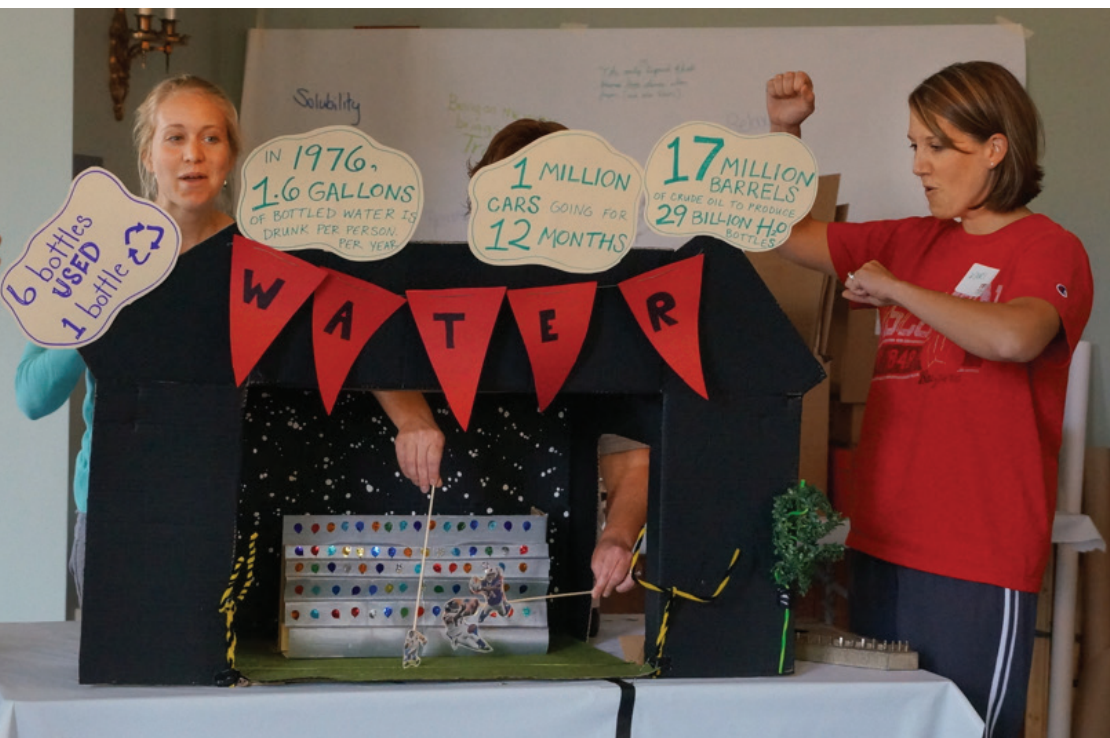
Three themes emerge from this study about teachers' capacities for arts integration and the likelihood of these skills remaining in the participants' teaching repertoires in the future:

1. Teacher capacity to assess and respond to arts integration units.

As teachers learn about assessment they develop appropriate tools and measures to provide feedback to students. As a teacher's understanding and use of assessment increases, so does their ability to judge the effectiveness of arts-integrated instruction. They become better able to make adjustments during instruction, or immediately afterward in collegial post-unit reflection. Participants' opportunities to engage in focused reflection and panel reviews of student work became a key aspect of the project and a resource for schools developing their strategies for arts integration.

2. "Inspiration" as a source for teacher innovation.

Inspiration can draw students in, pique their interest and serve as an entry point to engagement. Inspiration may draw on personal connection to material or may signal a way to learn that seems new or innovative. Though arts integration is not a new concept, teachers said that arts integration seemed innovative to them. In the face of standardized testing and accountability, the opportunity to do artistic work felt novel to both students and teachers.



Teachers from Plainview, Minnesota, (left to right) Amanda Fry, Lynelle Snyder (partially covered), and Kari Donze, put on a puppet theater production about the amount of water used in the United States during an arts integrated kick-off workshop.

Teachers respond to the experiences in this project with the same thoughtfulness and engagement they seek to elicit from students. Perpich staff not only models innovative ideas, but also allows teachers to experience what engagement and thoughtfulness through innovation looks and feels like. Professional development experiences that included the arts provided fresh ideas that inspired the interest of teachers who, in turn used their experiences to tailor arts-integrated units to meet their students' needs and interests. Schools benefit from using the arts to inspire and engage teachers as well as students.

3. The influence of funding for teacher capacity.

Teachers spoke forcefully in interviews about the significance of the funding associated with the Perpich Arts Integration Project. Participating teachers made discretionary decisions about how funds would be divided, including for teacher stipends, substitute teacher pay to release teachers to attend workshops or planning meetings, materials, field trips, and for engaging community art experts in support of their unit goals.

When pressed to talk more about funding, one teacher stated, "We have such small classroom budgets. In planning, we always have to ask ourselves, 'What can I do to stretch this very small amount of money?' With Perpich, this is the first time we've been able to ask the question 'What do I want to do?'" Small amounts of funding can help teacher colleagues risk cross-curricular instruction, and promote staff confidence in arts integration.

“[The arts integration approach] made me realize that kids get it quicker if they see it several ways and in several places.

- Teacher Participant



KEY FINDINGS

Changes in Teacher Capacity

- **Capacity continues to improve** the longer participants work with the Perpich Center.
- Teacher capacity has increased most in **knowledge, collaboration, and reflection; creating and assessing units and modifying instruction based on analyzing student work.**
- Teacher capacity to **create arts-integrated units and to collaborate with colleagues in this process were greatly enhanced.**
- Teachers find **“inspiration” connected to recognizing “innovation.”** This leads to creative decision-making in unit design.
- Perpich **funding expands what is possible** to do with instruction.
- Teachers find **Perpich staff to be highly knowledgeable and helpful. They highly value Perpich supports and services.**

Changes in Student Learning

- **Students in arts-integrated lessons are 4.4 times more likely to be highly thoughtful and highly engaged** than in regular classroom instruction.
- **Students engage in more complex learning** situations covering a wide range of standards and benchmarks.
- **Students have consistently greater opportunities to engage in learning activities likely to promote learning** during arts-integrated instruction than during non-arts-integrated instruction.
- **80% of surveyed teachers agreed that students’ assessments reflected desired understanding of** the art form, the non-art area subject, **and** the ability to connect the two.
- **62% of students would like to do similar units in the future.**

62%

students would like to do similar units in future



80%

of teachers agreed students attained desired understanding

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT

The evaluation data indicate that the Perpich Arts Integration Project is developing high levels of teacher capacity and student engagement and thoughtfulness. Teachers are thinking about sustainability for the future. It is significant and essential that teacher leaders for arts integration are able to develop resources, unpack standards and benchmarks, design compelling units, create appropriate assessment strategies and critically evaluate the entire process in the schools. According to the evaluators, the project is well on the way to meeting its goals.

EVALUATION TEAM

Since 2012 the team of Bruce Wilson, Dick Corbett, George Noblit, and Alison LaGarry have evaluated the Perpich Arts Integration Project. The four are independent evaluators who have extensive experience evaluating school reform projects with a specialty in arts integration. They visited each project site and were able to observe 58 separate classes in 19 schools.

Teachers provided the evaluation team with:

- documents detailing standards-based unit planning
- assessments of student work from 1,161 young people (i.e. grades, percentage scores, instructional rubric results)
- student work samples
- Perpich staff and teacher reflections, and
- responses to survey questions about the effectiveness of Perpich services and the usefulness of arts integration skills the teachers had developed during the year

In addition, the evaluation team attended professional development meetings where they heard teachers talk about and engage in arts-integration firsthand. After thorough analysis the evaluators identified the key findings about changes in student learning and teacher capacity.



Triton High School, English language arts teacher John Schreiber, helps a student with an arts integrated project that was created and taught by visual arts teacher Ashley Ehlert, and music teacher, Markus Hahn.

PERPICH CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

This summary is one of an ongoing series of reports documenting the progress and future prospects of the Perpich Arts Integration Project, an initiative of the Perpich Center for Arts Education in Golden Valley, MN, an agency of the state of Minnesota.

The mission of this center is to provide Minnesota students the opportunity to develop and integrate their artistic and academic abilities to their highest potential. Perpich arts integration staff members work intensively over the course of several years with interested teams of educators from several geographic regions across the state to address project goals for teacher and student learning.

As the state agency dedicated to K-12 arts education since 1985, the Perpich Center for Arts Education has the expertise, tools, and infrastructure to design and provide innovative and effective programs to meet the learning needs of students and teachers statewide. The Center is comprised of the Arts High School, Crosswinds Arts and Science Middle School, outreach initiatives, and the state arts education library. More information about the Perpich Center can be found at its website at perpich.mn.gov.

In November 2008, Minnesota voters approved a constitutional amendment that created a dedicated sales tax to fund work related to clean water, land, habitat, parks, trails, arts, and cultural heritage. In 2009, a Senate sub-committee on arts education tasked the Perpich Center for Arts Education with designing and implementing two high quality educational projects using Arts and Cultural Heritage funds: the **Perpich Arts Integration Project** and the **Arts Education in Minnesota Schools Research Project**. The **Arts Education in Minnesota Schools Research Project** concluded in 2012 and the report can be found at bit.ly/ArtsEdReport. Due to initial successes, the Legislature asked the Perpich Center to continue expanding the Arts Integration Project in rural Minnesota and, to date, has provided funding through 2015.



The Perpich people are really good at asking questions. What do you think? How does that help you get where you want to go? Does that enhance or meet benchmark? They are so specific and their questions get you going. My ideas always start so big. It's nice to have them help me make them realistic.

- Teacher Participant

Perpich Arts Integration Project Participating Minnesota Schools 2010-2015

Lakes Country - 2010-2014

Breckenridge Elementary and Middle Schools, Breckenridge
Hawley High School, Hawley
Heart of the Lakes Elementary School, Perham
Lake Park Audubon Elementary, Lake Park
Moorhead High School, Moorhead
Morris Area Schools, Morris
New York Mills High School, New York Mills
Osakis Elementary, Osakis
Prairie Wind Middle School, Perham
Rothsay Public Schools, Rothsay
Viking Elementary School, Pelican Rapids
Wheaton Public Schools, Wheaton

Southeast - 2011-2015

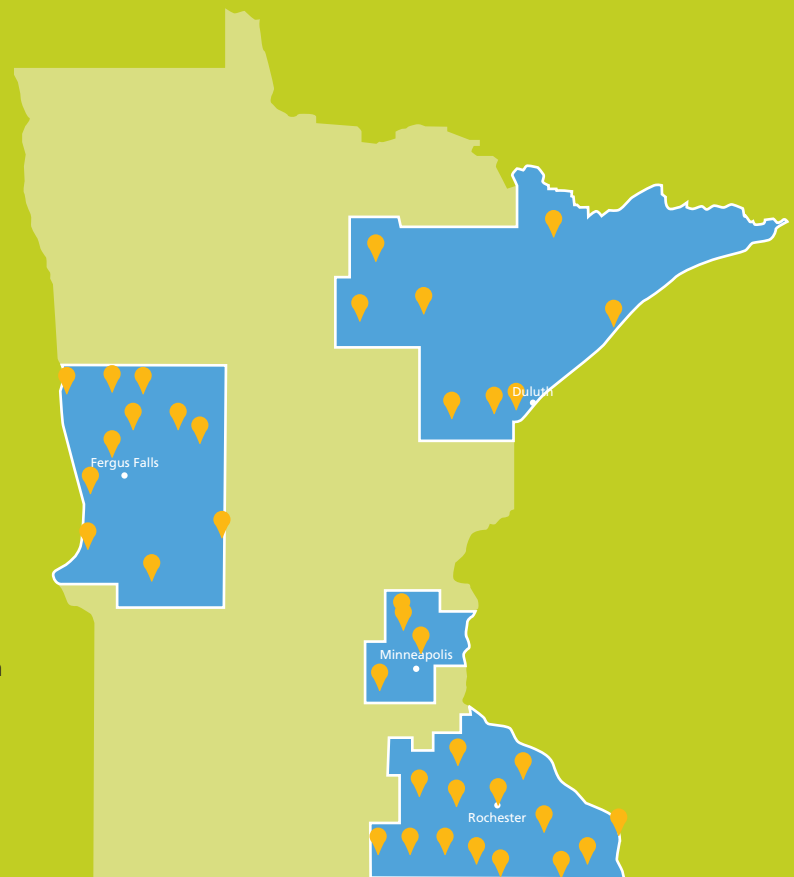
Alden-Conger Elementary School, Alden
Austin High School, Austin
John Adams Middle School, Rochester
Kenyon Wanamingo Elementary, Wanamingo
La Crescent Middle School and High School, La Crescent
LeRoy-Ostrander High School, LeRoy
Mabel-Canton Community School, Mabel
McKinley Elementary School, Owatonna
Plainview-Elgin-Millville 4-6 Grade School and High School, Elgin
Rushford-Peterson Schools, Rushford
Sibley Elementary School, Albert Lea
Southland Middle and High Schools, Adams
Spring Grove Public Schools, Spring Grove
Triton High School, Dodge Center

Northeast - 2014-2015

Bigfork Public Schools, Bigfork
Cromwell-Wright School, Cromwell
Deer River High School, Deer River
Ely Memorial Middle School, Ely
Hill City School, Hill City
Nashwauk-Keewatin High School, Nashwauk
Proctor Public Schools, Proctor
Washington Elementary School, Cloquet
William Kelley High School, Silver Bay

Arts Integration Course Development Network - 2014-2015

Anoka High School, Anoka
Anoka Middle School for the Arts, Anoka
Fairview High School, Roseville
Southland High School, Adams
Southwest Metro High School, Chaska



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